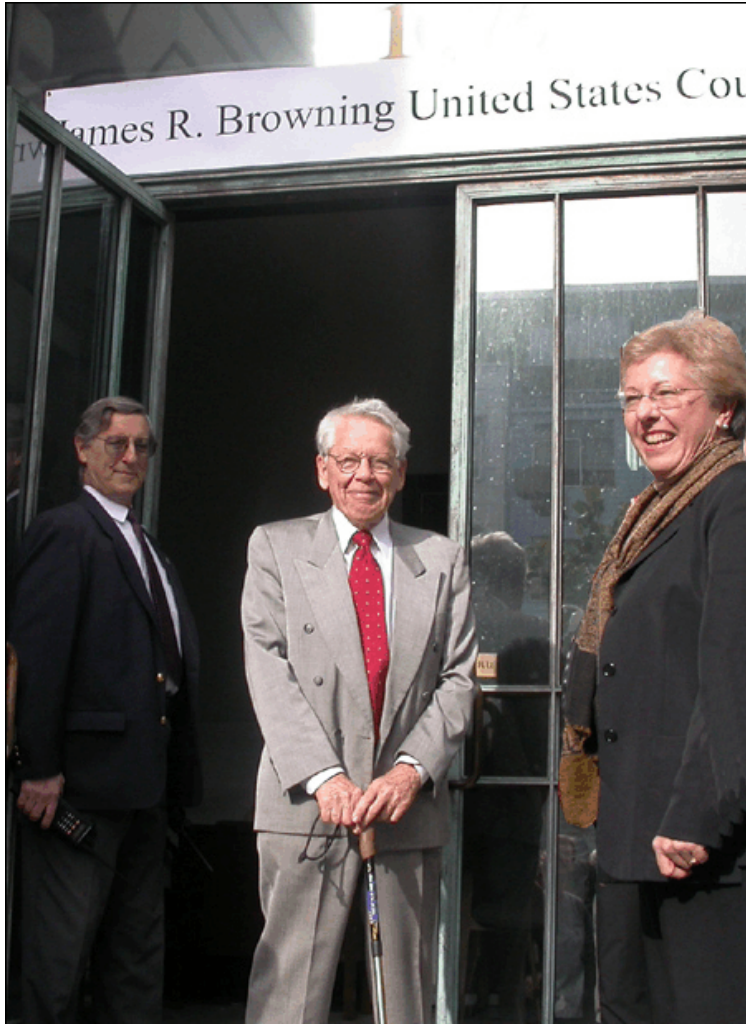


## Congress Bestows Honor on Judge James R. Browning

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By OCE Public Information Office



Congress has authorized the naming of the historic U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals building in San Francisco for Senior Circuit Judge James R. Browning, one of the nation's longest serving federal judges and an architect of the modern federal court system in the West.

The long-awaited honor resulted from the inclusion of legislation in a federal omnibus spending bill, which was passed by the House and Senate on Saturday and currently awaits President Bush's signature to become law. The legislation, first introduced several years ago, was added to the spending bill by Rep. Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco.

*Senior Circuit Judge James R. Browning is greeted by Court Clerk Cathy Catterson and Court Security Officer Nick Kraynik.*

"It is fitting that Judge Browning's achievements will be acknowledged by naming the historic federal building at Seventh and Mission Streets in his honor," Rep. Pelosi said in a prepared statement. "I am pleased that Judge Browning can witness this much-deserved tribute to his lifetime of public service."

Judge Browning, who celebrated his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday last month, has chambers in the San Francisco courthouse and was greeted Monday by fellow judges and court staff, who had adorned one of the building's entrances with a paper sign proclaiming it to be the

"James R. Browning United States Courthouse."

Nominated by President John F. Kennedy, Judge Browning received his commission as a Circuit Judge on September 18, 1961. He was elevated to chief judge in 1976 and served in that position for 12 years. During his tenure as chief, Judge Browning reorganized and modernized the administration of the circuit. Many judges who worked with Judge Browning during his time as chief judge recall fondly the emphasis he placed on judicial collegiality.

"Judge Browning's contributions to the law and to judicial governance have been immense," said current Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder of Phoenix. "As chief, he was a visionary and innovator who made inclusiveness and communication key principles in the functioning of the circuit."

Born in Great Falls, Mont., Judge Browning earned his juris doctorate degree from Montana State University Law School in 1941. He graduated with the highest scholastic record in his class and served as editor-in-chief of the law review. With the onset of World War II, Judge Browning entered the Army, rising to the rank of first lieutenant and winning a Bronze Star Medal for heroism.

At the end of the war, Judge Browning left the military service and took a job with the United States Department of Justice, where he rose steadily in the ranks. He served as special attorney, General Litigation Section of the Antitrust Division (1946-48); chief, Northwest Regional Office of the Antitrust Division (1948-49); assistant chief, Litigation Section, Antitrust Division (1949-51); first assistant, Civil Division (1951-52); and executive assistant to the Attorney General of the United States (1952-53). In 1953, he organized and served as first chief of the Executive Office of United States Attorneys.

In 1953, Judge Browning left the Department of Justice to enter private practice as a partner at Perlman, Lyons & Browning in Washington, D.C. But in 1958, he returned to government service as clerk of the United States Supreme Court. As clerk, he held the Bible used to swear President Kennedy into office. He was the last clerk of the court to perform this ceremonial task, which has since been performed by the spouses of incoming presidents.

For his many contributions toward improving the judicial system, in 1991, Judge Browning was awarded the Edward J. Devitt Award for Distinguished Service to Justice, which is presented annually to a United States federal judge. He also was honored by his Ninth Circuit colleagues along with leading members of the bar and academia at a special ceremony in 2001 that marked his 40<sup>th</sup> year of service on the bench.